



Negotiating Islamic Identity Through Cultural Adaptation: A Fiqh al-Aqalliyat Analysis of Masselle aseng Practice in Indonesian Muslim Minorities

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the negotiation of Islamic identity through adaptation of the masselle aseng tradition (name-changing ritual) in Indonesian Muslim minority communities using the *fiqh al-aqalliyat* framework. Using a comparative ethnographic approach, the research was conducted in three locations: Teteuri Village, North Luwu (Muslim majority context); Bugis Village, Singaraja, Bali (Muslim minority in Hindu majority); and Bugis Village, Ambon (post-conflict multireligious context). Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 18 key informants, participant observation, document analysis, and interfaith dialogue. Findings reveal a three-stage evolution model: Pure Form in a homogeneous context (Luwu), Syncretistic Fusion through interfaith collaboration (Bali), and Universalistic Translation with neutral framing (Ambon). Demographic factors, cultural compatibility, historical context, and social integration need to be systematically considered in adaptation strategies. Islamic legal validation through *'urf sahib* principles evolves from internal mechanisms to collaborative authority involving non-Muslim perspectives. Interfaith dynamics produce three engagement models: separation, active collaboration, and diplomatic neutrality. The research contributes to the *fiqh al-aqalliyat* theory through the development of a dynamic authenticity framework that positions adaptation as a sophisticated survival strategy for maintaining traditional continuity while achieving social integration. This framework has broad applicability for global Muslim minority communities in navigating cultural preservation challenges and social harmony.

How to cite:

Nur, R. T., Rismawati, R., Amirullah, A., Wagay, J. A., & Nurdin, E. (2025). Negotiating Islamic Identity Through Cultural Adaptation: A *Fiqh al-aqalliyat* Analysis of Masselle aseng Practice in Indonesian Muslim Minorities. *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah*, 23(1), 117–138. <https://doi.org/10.30984/jis.v23i1.3132>

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted/ Received 22 Agt 2024

First Revised 18 Feb 2025

Accepted 20 Jun 2025

First Available online 29 Jun 2025

Publication Date 29 Jun 2025

Keywords:

Fiqh al-aqalliyat,
Cultural adaptation,
Muslim minorities,
Masselle aseng,
Islamic identity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and modernization characterized by high cross-cultural mobility, Muslim minority communities worldwide face complex challenges in maintaining Islamic identity while integrating with non-Muslim majority societies (Alfarisi et al., 2025; Susanti et al., 2025). This phenomenon is particularly prominent in Southeast Asia, where approximately 298 million people live in diverse religious plurality contexts (Worldometer, 2025). These challenges relate not only to formal worship practices but also concern the preservation of cultural traditions that have long been integral parts of community identity. In the context of globalization, legal unification, and rationalization of religious practices, many local traditions risk experiencing marginalization or extinction (Khoury et al., 2022). This trend particularly occurs in multicultural Muslim countries like Indonesia, where various local practices must reconcile their relevance within the Islamic legal framework (Akhmar et al., 2023; Mahmudulhassan, 2024).

Indonesia, with its 17,380 islands and extraordinary religious landscape diversity, presents a unique context where Muslims often become minorities in certain regions (Badan Informasi Geospasial, 2024; Nashori et al., 2024). The phenomenon of massive internal migration has created diaspora of Muslim communities from Muslim-majority origin areas, such as Bugis communities from North Luwu, South Sulawesi to regions with different demographic configurations like Bali and Ambon. In recent decades, globalization and legal centralization have progressively threatened the preservation of local customs, particularly in Southeast Asia (Aditya & Al-Fatih, 2023; Jan et al., 2024; Khoury et al., 2022). Cultural rituals in Indonesian local communities may face marginalization due to lack of formal recognition by national legal or religious systems. The 2023 cultural heritage assessment from the Ministry of Education and Culture shows that more than 40% of recorded regional rituals are no longer practiced in their original forms (Kabupaten Bantul, 2017). This dispersed geographical context creates a natural laboratory for observing how Muslim minority communities develop cultural adaptation strategies without losing their religious authenticity, with comparison of tradition evolution from original contexts to adapted forms.

The limitation of empirical studies on how *fiqh al-aqalliyat* (minority jurisprudence) operates in living religious practices becomes a significant research gap. Most existing literature focuses on theoretical and normative aspects, with little attention to concrete mechanisms used by Muslim minority communities to validate and maintain their traditions (Widyawati & Lon, 2023). Research combining juridical analysis with deep ethnography remains very limited, though this approach is important for understanding the actual dynamics of Islamic legal adaptation in minority contexts.

This problem is specifically prominent in multicultural Muslim countries like Indonesia, where local customs must reconcile their legitimacy with changing Islamic legal interpretations (Akhmar et al., 2023). Researchers have noted that these negotiations often result in gradual modification or cessation of traditions, depending on their alignment with prevailing religious norms (Bartkowski, 2014; Curtit & Fornerod, 2016; Mukhametzaripov & Kozlov, 2024). There exists a fundamental theoretical tension between maintaining Islamic authenticity and cultural adaptation in minority contexts, requiring a sophisticated analytical framework to understand how Muslim minority communities navigate this complexity (Egger, 2016). The practical challenge faced is how Muslim minority communities validate their traditional practices through the Islamic legal framework without losing the spiritual and cultural essence that has been inherited through generations.

The *Masselle aseng* tradition, a name-changing ritual performed in wedding ceremonies of Bugis communities originating from the North Luwu region, South Sulawesi, represents this broader adaptation dynamic (Jusman, 2024). The practice that has been conducted for generations in the Bugis Muslim majority context in Teteuri Village, South Sabbang District, North Luwu Regency, undergoes significant evolution when Bugis communities migrate to Muslim minority regions like Bali and Ambon. This practice functions not only as a cultural ritual but also as a spiritual mechanism for achieving cosmic and social balance, making it a representative case for understanding the trajectory of local Islamic tradition evolution from majority to minority settings. The comparison between the original form in North Luwu with its adaptations in Bali (Hindu majority) and Ambon (post-conflict multireligious) provides unique insights into how *'urf sahib* operates across different demographic spectrums.

The classical foundation of *fiqh al-aqalliyat* can be traced from the works of scholars like al-Qarāfī, al-Sarakhsī, and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, who outlined the importance of *'urf* in legal reasoning, especially in situations where the Qur'an and Sunnah are silent, unclear, or subject to contextual interpretation (Akram, 2019; Nurhayati, 2013; Parray, 2012). In this framework, *'urf* operates not merely as cultural residue, but as a dynamic and contextually responsive tool for legal adaptation (Akhmar et al., 2023; Alfurqan et al., 2025). Contemporary developments of this theory have been expanded by modern scholars exploring its application in the context of globalization and religious pluralism. However, empirical application of these theories in specific Muslim minority community contexts still requires deeper research.

Studies on *'urf* sahih in minority contexts show that customary legal adaptation is not only about survival, but also about proactive strategies for building cultural and spiritual bridges with majority societies. Previous research in Indonesia has explored various cultural negotiation strategies used by Muslim minority communities, including spiritual diplomacy, ritual hybridity, and identity reframing, such as research conducted by Indreswaria et al. (2020), Ismail & Asso (2024), Marhayati & Suryanto (2017), Nurhayati (2013), Weng (2014), and Zuhri et al. (2021) revealing that Indonesian Muslim minority communities apply spiritual diplomacy through forgiveness and friendship building approaches, ritual hybridity by integrating local customs and Islamic practices such as halal sacrificial animal substitution in Jayawijaya, and identity reframing through distinctive identity construction and nationalism contextualization as cultural adaptation strategies. However, in-depth analysis of juridical validation mechanisms of these adaptation practices remains scarce in academic literature.

Research on Indonesian Muslim minority communities has revealed various cultural negotiation strategies, but focus on in-depth analysis of specific ritual adaptation mechanisms using baseline comparison remains limited (Takdir et al., 2024; M. Yusuf et al., 2021). Existing studies tend to be descriptively anthropological without integrating comprehensive juridical analysis of how such adaptations are validated through the Islamic legal framework in different demographic contexts. A significant research gap lies in the lack of ethnographic analysis of specific ritual adaptation mechanisms that combine Islamic legal perspectives with the sociocultural reality of minority communities, as well as the absence of a systematic comparative framework to understand tradition evolution from original form (majority context) to adapted forms (minority contexts).

Most existing studies focus on single-site analysis without baseline comparison that enables comprehensive understanding of adaptation trajectory.

This research aims to analyze the evolution of the *masselle aseng* tradition from its original context in North Luwu (Bugis Muslim majority) to its adaptations in Muslim minority communities in Bali and Ambon, focusing on how communities use *'urf* sahih principles to maintain Islamic legitimacy while adapting to different demographic environments. Specifically, this research will answer the questions: (1) How does the *masselle aseng* tradition evolve from its original form in North Luwu to adapted forms in Bali and Ambon? (2) What demographic and cultural factors influence adaptation trajectory in different majority-minority contexts? (3) What Islamic legal reasoning (*'urf sahib*) validates these adaptations across different religious environments? (4) How do interfaith interactions influence evolution from homogeneous to pluralistic religious practice? (5) What mechanisms ensure cultural continuity while maintaining Islamic authenticity across different demographic spectrums?

Theoretically, this research contributes to *fiqh al-aqalliyat* theory through three-site comparative analysis that shows how theoretical principles evolve from majority to minority contexts. The practical contribution of this research is to provide an evolutionary framework for Muslim minority communities worldwide in developing systematic cultural adaptation strategies, with learning from the Luwu-Bali-Ambon trajectory as a model for cultural negotiation that maintains religious integrity while facilitating harmonious social integration.

2. METHODS

This research employs a qualitative ethnographic approach (Reeves et al., 2013) with comparative case analysis (Venditti & Pagel, 2015) to understand the dynamics of *masselle aseng* tradition adaptation in Muslim minority communities. The ethnographic approach was chosen for its ability to reveal deep meanings of cultural and spiritual practices that cannot be understood through quantitative methods (Vesa & Vaara, 2014). The methodological framework used is juridical-anthropological methodology that combines Islamic legal analysis with cultural ethnography (Hasan et al., 2023; Huda, 2021). This juridical-sociological approach enables researchers to observe the function of legal traditions based on *'urf* (recognized custom) within the broader Islamic legal framework and its adaptation to cultural changes.

The research paradigm employed is interpretive phenomenology to understand lived religious experiences in Muslim minority communities (Frechette et al., 2020). This paradigm allows researchers to explore how individuals and communities give meaning to, interpret, and live their religious traditions in complex social contexts. The phenomenological approach is highly relevant for understanding the process of Islamic identity negotiation in non-Muslim majority environments, because of its focus on subjective and intersubjective meanings of religious experience.

This research was conducted in three strategic locations representing the Muslim demographic spectrum from majority to minority. The first location is Teteuri Village, South Sabbang District, North Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi, which functions as a baseline comparison with the characteristics of a Bugis Muslim majority community (more than 81% of the population) where the *masselle aseng* tradition is practiced in its original form (Darmawan, 2024a). The second location is Bugis Village, Singaraja, Bali, representing a Muslim minority community in a Hindu majority context. Bali was chosen because it has unique characteristics as the only province in Indonesia

with a Hindu majority (more than 86% of the population), while Muslims comprise only about 10% of the total population (Darmawan, 2024b). The third location is Bugis Village, Rijali Sub-district, Sirimau District, Ambon City, representing a Muslim minority community in a post-conflict multireligious setting. Ambon was chosen because it has a complex history of interfaith conflict (1999-2002) and a unique reconciliation process (Sudjatmiko, 2008a). Ambon's relatively balanced religious composition between Muslims (about 49%) and Christians (about 50%) with a small number of traditional religion adherents creates a different context for Muslim cultural adaptation (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019).

The selection of these three locations is based on a comparative trajectory analysis framework that enables systematic understanding of *masselle aseng* tradition evolution across different demographic contexts. First, North Luwu as the baseline original context where the tradition is practiced in a homogeneous Bugis Muslim majority environment without external adaptation pressure, enabling documentation of the "pure form" of traditional practice (Saxena & Rao, 2022). Second, Bali as a syncretistic adaptation context where Muslim minorities must negotiate with Hindu majority culture that has a compatible yet distinct spiritual worldview, creating a cultural fusion adaptation model (Croucher & Kramer, 2017). Third, Ambon as a universalistic adaptation context where Muslim minorities operate in a post-conflict multireligious environment that demands careful navigation to avoid religious tensions, resulting in a neutral universalistic approach (Ngale, 2019).

Additionally, all three locations show the presence of active *sandro* (spiritual leaders) who maintain traditional practices with legitimacy recognized by their respective communities. Evidence of cultural adaptation and interfaith interaction in Bali and Ambon provides rich empirical context for analyzing identity negotiation mechanisms, while Luwu provides a reference point for understanding the magnitude and direction of adaptations. The demographic spectrum represented—from 81%+ Muslim (Luwu) to 10% Muslim (Bali) enables comprehensive analysis of the relationship between demographic position and adaptation strategies.

This research uses a purposive sampling strategy that emphasizes informant competence in religious and cultural domains across three different demographic contexts. Participant categorization is designed to capture different levels of traditional authority and community engagement: baseline traditional authorities in Luwu who maintain original practices, adaptive spiritual leaders in Bali and Ambon who navigate minority contexts, community practitioners who experience tradition evolution, and interfaith contacts who provide majority perspectives on minority adaptations.

Key informants in this research include representatives from all three demographic contexts. From North Luwu: H. Jusman, religious leader and *masselle aseng* practitioner who has authoritative knowledge about the original tradition; Ambo Tola, community leader who has practiced *masselle aseng* for his child's marriage and can explain traditional procedures; Firuddin, traditional leader with deep understanding of the philosophical foundations of the practice. From Bali: Daeng Bella, a *sandro* in Bugis Village Singaraja who was interviewed on May 6, 2024, with expertise in cultural adaptation and syncretistic practices; Jero Pastika, a *pemangku* (Hindu priest) who provides interfaith perspective on acceptance and collaboration with Muslim minority practices. From

Ambon: Pattiro Saddia, a *sandro* in Bugis Village Ambon who was interviewed on May 10, 2024, with experience [content appears to be incomplete in original].

Data collection was conducted through the main method of semi-structured ethnographic interviews with spiritual leaders to obtain deep understanding of the philosophy, procedures, and adaptations of the *masselle aseng* tradition.

Data analysis uses a multi-methods approach that combines thematic analysis, comparative frameworks, Islamic legal analysis, and triangulation. Thematic analysis was conducted with coding for adaptation strategies, legitimation mechanisms, and cultural negotiation using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Masselle Aseng tradition in Bugis Muslim society in Teteuri Village, South Sulawesi, is a name-changing practice performed during wedding ceremonies to create household harmony. The numerological system that forms the basis of this tradition uses calculations of Bugis script letter values that have been practiced for generations and gained legitimacy through the concept of *'Urf* sahiih in Islamic law (Putri, 2020). To understand the name calculation mechanism in the Masselle Aseng tradition, the following presents the letter assessment system used by Bugis society in determining the numerical balance of married couples (Akib, 2016).

Table 1. Spelling Letters of the Bugis Script

Letter	Number								
A	5	B	5	C	5	D	5	E	5
F	5	G	5	H	5	I	6	J	6
K	5	L	5	M	5	N	5	O	5
P	5	Q	5	R	5	S	5	T	6
U	5	V	5	X	5	Y	5	Z	5

Source: Interview Data, author elaboration. 2024

From Table 1, it can be understood that the Bugis numerological system uses a very simple yet structured assessment method to calculate the spiritual value of a name. This system divides all letters in the alphabet into two different value categories based on the spiritual beliefs of Bugis society. Most letters, namely 23 letters (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, U, V, X, Y, Z) have a standard value of five points, while three special letters (I, J, T) have a higher value of six points. This value difference indicates that certain letters are considered to have greater spiritual power in Bugis tradition. Name value calculation is done by summing all letter values that form the name, as illustrated in the case of Anarsanti (47) and Anwar (25) which were then changed to Rohana and Nawang (each 30) to achieve numerical balance.

Table 1 can be understood that this system functions not only as a calculation tool, but as a complex manifestation of local wisdom that integrates spiritual, social, and cultural aspects in Bugis marriage traditions. The philosophy of balance becomes the core of this system, where value differences that are too large between the names of married couples are believed to cause disharmony in the household (Carroll et al., 2011). Letters I, J, and T that have higher values likely have special spiritual meaning in Bugis tradition, and the presence of these letters in names will

increase the total value and provide stronger spiritual influence. This system is practically used by Bugis society to evaluate name compatibility of couples before marriage, change names if necessary to achieve balance, and ensure harmony in household relationships, reflecting local wisdom that combines spiritual aspects with social practices in Bugis community life.

Evolution of *Masselle aseng* Tradition Across Demographic Contexts

The evolution of the *masselle aseng* tradition from Bugis communities shows a systematic transformation trajectory along with changes in demographic contexts and religious environments (Husain et al., 2020). This research identifies three qualitatively different evolution stages, starting from the original form in homogeneous settings to complex adaptations in Muslim minority contexts.

Original Practice in North Luwu: Baseline in Muslim Majority

In the original context in Teteuri Village, South Sanggalang District, North Luwu Regency, the *masselle aseng* tradition operates in a homogeneous demographic environment with Bugis Muslim majority reaching more than 81% of the population. This practice maintains a relatively pure form without external adaptation pressure, where the name calculation system uses Bugis script numerical values as the foundation for determining compatibility between prospective spouses. H. Jusman, religious leader and *masselle aseng* practitioner, explains:

"The numerical values of letters in Bugis script are used as the basis for this calculation."
(Interview, H. Jusman, religious leaders, Rongkong, March 20, 2024)

This system has been established for generations with each letter having specific numerical values for assessing harmonic balance between two names.

Firuddin, a traditional leader, affirms the deep philosophy behind this practice:

"In our tradition, name changing is not arbitrary; it involves calculations to match the names of male and female prospective spouses, ensuring their post-marriage life is aligned with expectations." (Interview, Firuddin, traditional leader, Rongkong, March 20, 2024)

A concrete example is seen in Ambo Tola's case who practiced *masselle aseng* for his child's marriage, changing the name Anarsanti (value 47) to Rohana (value 30) and Anwar (value 25) to Nawang (value 30) to create numerical balance. Ambo Tola affirms the legitimacy of this tradition:

"This *Masselle aseng* tradition has long been a tradition of Bugis society and has become a family tradition, especially in my own family. But once again, matters of fortune and misfortune are determined by Allah's will." (Interview, Ambo Tola, the elder, Rongkong, March 21, 2024)

Syncretistic Adaptation in Bali: Modification in Muslim Minority

Significant evolution occurs when Bugis communities migrate to Bali, where they become Muslim minorities (10%) in a Hindu majority (86%). Daeng Bella, a *sandro* in Bugis Village Singaraja, develops sophisticated adaptation strategies through integration with Hindu cosmology. This minority context demands careful cultural negotiation to maintain tradition legitimacy while

building bridges with the majority Hindu community. Daeng Bella explains the strategic adaptation:

"Balinese people also know that this world is not only what is visible. They respect that. That's why here, when I help people change names, I also use local elements. There are flowers, holy water, even soft gamelan so that harmony is maintained between Bugis customs and Balinese customs." (Interview, Daeng Bella, spiritual leaders, Kampung Bugis-Buleleng-Singaraja-Bali, May 6, 2024)

The most remarkable innovation is the development of interfaith collaboration between Bugis *sandro* and *pemangku* (Hindu priests). Jero Pastika, a *pemangku* who collaborates with Daeng Bella, acknowledges shared spiritual values:

"The synchronicity of Jagad Agung (the universe) with Jagad Alit (the human body) will produce harmony that has an effect on the peace of that person's life." (Interview, Daeng Bella, spiritual leaders, Kampung Bugis-Buleleng-Singaraja-Bali, May 6, 2024)

This collaboration creates an unprecedented model where Islamic ritual receives blessing and recognition from Hindu religious authority, demonstrating the possibility for interfaith spiritual cooperation without theological compromise (Faizuddin Ramli et al., 2023). This adaptation involves the incorporation of *tirta* (holy water), flowers, and gamelan music as cultural bridges that enable Hindu neighbors to understand and accept *masselle aseng* as a legitimate spiritual practice.

Universalistic Transformation in Ambon: Post-Conflict Multireligious Context

In Ambon, with balanced religious composition (49% Muslim, 50% Christian) and legacy of communal conflict 1999-2002, the tradition undergoes fundamentally different transformation (Sudjatmiko, 2008b). Pattiro Saddia, *sandro* in Bugis Village Ambon, develops a universalistic approach that reframes *masselle aseng* from Islamic traditional practice to universal spiritual healing mechanism. Pattiro explains:

"In Bugis tradition, names are not just identity—they carry destiny (*naseng*). If someone experiences continuous illness, misfortune, or spiritual imbalance, it could be that the name used is not in harmony with cosmic energy and ancestors." (Interview, Pattiro Saddia, spiritual leaders, Kampung Bugis, Kelurahan Rijali, Kecamatan Sirimau, Ambon, May 10, 2024)

Crucial in Pattiro's approach is careful avoidance of explicitly Islamic terminology that could create religious boundaries. The practice is framed as traditional wisdom that is beneficial for anyone regardless of religious affiliation. Pattiro affirms:

"The name-changing ceremony is understood here as a way to rebalance spiritual life. Even non-Bugis people acknowledge the power of spiritual harmony when someone changes their name to heal or be protected." (Interview, Pattiro Saddia, spiritual leaders, Kampung Bugis, Kelurahan Rijali, Kecamatan Sirimau, Ambon, May 10, 2024).

The success of the universalistic approach is evident from genuine cross-religious acceptance where non-Muslim neighbors not only tolerate but sometimes seek consultation for their own spiritual concerns.

Systematic Evolution Pattern: Three-Stage Transformation Model

Comparative analysis reveals a systematic evolution trajectory with three distinct stages: (1) Pure Form in homogeneous Muslim context (Luwu) with internal Islamic validation; (2) Syncretistic Fusion in Hindu-majority environment (Bali) through cultural integration and interfaith collaboration; and (3) Universalistic Translation in multireligious post-conflict setting (Ambon) through neutral framing and diplomatic spirituality (Cockburn, 2022; Litnevsky et al., 2014). Each stage shows sophisticated adaptation strategies that preserve core spiritual philosophy while modifying ritual forms to achieve legitimacy in specific demographic contexts. This progression demonstrates the capacity of Islamic traditions to evolve creatively without losing essential character, providing a valuable framework for understanding minority Muslim adaptation processes globally.

Factors Influencing Adaptation

Comparative analysis of the evolution of the *masselle aseng* tradition across three demographic contexts reveals that adaptation is not determined by a single variable, but rather by complex interactions between demographic, cultural, historical, and social factors. This research identifies a multi-variable model that can predict the trajectory and intensity of adaptation of Islamic practices in minority contexts (Emken & Reinkensmeyer, 2025).

Demographic Factors: Impact of Muslim Percentage in Population

The percentage of Muslims in the total population shows a significant correlation with the intensity of adaptation required, although this relationship is not simply linear. In North Luwu, with a Muslim majority of over 81%, the *masselle aseng* practice can be maintained in its original form without substantial modification because there is no external pressure for accommodation. This homogeneous context allows for full integration between Islamic worldview and traditional Bugis practices, as confirmed by Ambo Tola:

"Matters of fortune and misfortune are determined by Allah's will." (Interview, Ambo Tola, Rongkong, March 21, 2024)

This is showing seamless theological integration.

However, adaptation patterns in Bali (10% Muslim) and Ambon (49% Muslim) demonstrate that the magnitude of adaptation is not simply proportional to minority status. Although Bali has the lowest percentage of Muslims, the adaptation that occurs is syncretistic and collaborative, not defensive or isolative. Conversely, in Ambon with a higher percentage of Muslims, adaptation is actually more radical in the form of universalistic neutralization. This shows that demographic composition alone is insufficient for predicting adaptation strategies without considering other equally determinant factors.

Cultural Factors: Religious Worldview Compatibility

Compatibility between Islamic worldview and the dominant religious culture shows a profound impact on the adaptation strategy chosen. In Bali, Hindu cosmology with the concept of *sekala-niskala* (visible-invisible dimensions) shows remarkable compatibility with Bugis understanding of

spiritual realms and cosmic harmony. Jero Pastika, a Hindu *pemangku*, acknowledges shared spiritual values:

"The synchronicity of Jagad Agung (universe) with Jagad Alit (human body) will produce harmony." (Interview, Jero Pastika, Hindu leaders, Bali, March 21, 2024)

This demonstrates a theological affinity that enables a cultural fusion approach.

In contrast to this, in Ambon, where Christianity as the dominant religion has a more exclusive and rigidly monotheistic worldview, the adaptation strategy shifts to universal framing that avoids specific religious references. Pattiro Sattia carefully frames the practice as "cosmic energy and ancestors" rather than Islamic spiritual authority, indicating recognition that direct theological integration is not feasible as it is in Bali. Cultural compatibility thus determines not just the possibility of adaptation, but also the specific form that adaptation will take.

Historical Factors: Peaceful Coexistence vs Post-Conflict Reconciliation

Historical context, particularly the presence or absence of interfaith conflict, significantly shapes adaptation requirements and community sensitivities. In Bali, traditional patterns of peaceful coexistence and cultural tolerance create an environment conducive to experimental interfaith collaboration. Daeng Bella can openly collaborate with Hindu *pemangku* and incorporate Hindu elements without fear of community backlash or religious tension escalation.

Conversely, the legacy of communal conflict from 1999-2002 in Ambon creates a highly sensitive environment where any religious practice that appears exclusive or threatening can easily trigger community tensions (Budiwanti & Eidhamar, 2024). Post-conflict reconciliation needs demand an extra careful approach that prioritizes community harmony over religious distinctiveness. Pattiro Sattia's universalistic strategy reflects sophisticated understanding of post-conflict psychology and the necessity of framing practices in terms that are non-threatening to all religious communities.

Social Factors: Community Integration Requirements and Interfaith Dynamics

The level of social integration expected or required by minority communities significantly influences adaptation strategies. In Bali, the tourism-based economy and cultural openness create expectations for active participation in broader community life, encouraging a collaborative adaptation approach (Turčinović et al., 2025). The success of *sandro-pemangku* collaboration reflects broader social expectations for interfaith cooperation and mutual enrichment.

In Ambon, post-conflict social dynamics emphasize careful balance and mutual respect rather than active integration, leading to a diplomatic adaptation strategy that maintains distinctiveness while avoiding confrontation. Community integration requirements thus shape not only the degree of adaptation but also specific mechanisms for achieving social acceptance and legitimacy.

Multi-Variable Predictive Model

Synthesis of this analysis produces a multi-variable model that suggests adaptation strategy and intensity are determined by the intersection of: (1) Demographic ratio (which determines baseline pressure for adaptation); (2) Cultural compatibility (which determines feasibility and form of religious integration); (3) Historical context (which determines level of interfaith sensitivity and trust); and (4) Social integration expectations (which determines specific adaptation mechanisms

required). This model provides a framework for predicting adaptation patterns for Muslim minority communities in various global contexts, contributing significantly to understanding minority religious dynamics and cultural resilience strategies (Abu-Rayya et al., 2023; Bui & Do, 2022; Emken & Reinkensmeyer, 2025; Trifonova & Lebedeva, 2024).

Islamic Legal Validation and Application of '*Urf Sahih*

Islamic legal validation of the evolution of the *masselle aseng* tradition demonstrates sophisticated application of '*urf sahib* principles that adapt to Muslim minority contexts (Abdillah, 2021; J. M. Yusuf & Yuslem, 2023). This research reveals that juridical reasoning is not static, but rather evolves through creative interpretation that maintains core Islamic principles while accommodating contextual requirements of demographic diversity.

Application of Classical 'Urf Sahih Criteria Across Contexts

The classical '*urf sahib* framework established by scholars such as al-Qarāfi and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah sets three fundamental criteria: good intention (*niyyah ṣāliḥah*), public benefit (*maslahah*), and no contradiction with explicit Islamic teachings (*lā yu'arīḍu al-naṣṣ*). Comparative analysis shows that these three criteria are consistently maintained across all three contexts, but with sophisticated interpretative flexibility to accommodate minority requirements. In the North Luwu context, validation through *niyyah* is clearly seen in Ambo Tola's statement:

"Matters of fortune and misfortune are determined by Allah's will," (Interview, Ambo Tola, Rongkong, March 21, 2024)

This argument showing fundamental Islamic understanding that ultimate sovereignty belongs to Allah, while *masselle aseng* functions as *ikhtiar* (spiritual effort) in seeking divine blessing. The *maslahah* principle is fulfilled through the practice's contribution to marital harmony and community cohesion, while non-contradiction is maintained because the practice does not involve any elements forbidden in Islamic law.

In Bali, the same criteria are applied but with broader interpretation of *maslahah* that includes interfaith harmony as a legitimate Islamic objective. Daeng Bella's incorporation of Hindu elements such as *tirta* and flowers does not violate Islamic principles because their function is purely symbolic and aesthetic, not theological. *Niyyah* remains focused on spiritual healing and cosmic balance that is consistent with Islamic understanding of divine harmony, while *maslahah* is expanded to include social bridge-building with the majority community. Critical insight from Jero Pastika about "Synchronicity of Jagad Agung with Jagad Alit" actually resonates with the Islamic concept of microcosm-macrocosm harmony found in Sufi traditions (Rakhmetkyzy, 2014).

The Ambon context demonstrates the most sophisticated application where *niyyah* is deliberately universalized to avoid religious exclusivity, yet maintains underlying Islamic understanding of spiritual healing and divine intervention. Pattiro Saddia's careful framing as "cosmic energy and ancestors" preserves Islamic belief in unseen influences while presenting in language that is accessible and non-threatening to non-Muslim communities. *Maslahah* achieves the highest level because it includes post-conflict reconciliation and community peace-building, which aligns with Islamic emphasis on social justice and peaceful coexistence.

Evolution of Validation Mechanisms: From Internal to Collaborative Authority

The most significant evolution lies in the transformation of validation authority from purely internal Islamic mechanisms to increasingly collaborative approaches that incorporate non-Muslim perspectives. In North Luwu, traditional ulama-sandro dual authority suffices because the homogeneous context allows clear Islamic validation without external challenges. H. Jusman and other religious leaders can provide definitive rulings based on established jurisprudential principles without the need for external accommodation.

Bali adaptation introduces unprecedented interfaith validation mechanisms where Hindu *pemangku* participate in legitimizing Islamic practice. Collaboration between Daeng Bella and Jero Pastika represents jurisprudential innovation that expands the traditional concept of scholarly consensus (*ijmā'*) to include interfaith dialogue (Hurd, 2015) in determining custom validity. This development suggests an emerging framework for "collaborative '*urf*'" where minority Muslim practices receive validation not only from Islamic authorities but also from majority religious leaders, creating stronger social legitimacy.

Ambon demonstrates the most radical evolution toward community-based validation where legitimacy derives primarily from broader social acceptance across religious boundaries rather than specific religious authorization. Pattiro Saddia's approach reflects understanding that in post-conflict contexts, community harmony takes precedence over religious distinctiveness, leading to validation mechanisms that emphasize universal spiritual benefits over sectarian jurisprudential arguments.

Jurisprudential Innovation: Expanding 'Urf Sahih for Minority Contexts

Research findings contribute significant theoretical innovation in expanding classical '*urf sahih*' theory to address minority Muslim requirements. Traditional jurisprudence assumes Muslim-majority contexts where customary practices operate within broader Islamic legal frameworks. However, minority contexts require additional criteria that account for interfaith dynamics and social integration needs.

The emerging framework suggests supplementary criteria for minority '*urf sahih*': (1) Diplomatic *maslahah* - practices should contribute toward interfaith harmony and minority-majority relations; (2) Cultural translation capability - customs should be articulable in universal terms that are accessible to non-Muslim communities; (3) Community resilience - practices should strengthen minority identity without creating social tensions; and (4) Collaborative validation - legitimacy enhanced through engagement with majority religious authorities when feasible (Khairiah et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2024; Susanto, 2025).

This innovation represents a paradigm shift from defensive minority jurisprudence to proactive cultural diplomacy that uses Islamic legal principles as tools for building bridges rather than barriers. This framework demonstrates the capacity of Islamic law to evolve creative solutions for contemporary challenges while maintaining doctrinal integrity, contributing valuable perspective to global discourse on religious minorities and legal pluralism.

Dynamic Interpretation in Pluralistic Societies

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in demonstrating that '*urf sahih*' functions not as a static legal category but as a dynamic interpretive mechanism that can accommodate complex

social realities of pluralistic societies. Classical emphasis on community consensus (*ijmā' al-ummah*) expands in minority contexts to include broader social validation that transcends religious boundaries while maintaining Islamic authenticity.

This dynamic interpretation provides a framework for Muslim minorities globally in navigating cultural preservation and social integration challenges. Rather than viewing adaptation as compromise or dilution of Islamic principles, this framework positions creative cultural negotiation as legitimate expression of Islamic legal wisdom that is capable of responding constructively to diverse social contexts while maintaining core spiritual and ethical commitments.

Interfaith Dynamics and Practice Transformation

Interfaith interaction plays a determinant role in shaping the evolution of the *masselle aseng* tradition, with different interfaith contexts producing distinct transformation pathways. This research identifies three models of interfaith engagement that systematically influence ritual forms, community participation patterns, and broader social integration strategies of Muslim minority communities.

Separation Model: Homogeneous Validation in North Luwu

In the North Luwu context with a homogeneous Muslim majority, interfaith interaction is minimal because demographic composition does not demand significant engagement with non-Muslim communities. This separation model is characterized by internal validation mechanisms that are sufficient for maintaining traditional practices without external accommodation requirements. Firuddin and other traditional leaders can operate with full autonomy in determining ritual procedures and spiritual interpretations, as seen in the confident assertion:

"Name changing is not arbitrary; it involves calculations to match the names of prospective bride and groom." (Interview, Firuddin, traditional leader, Rongkong, March 20, 2024)

The separation model allows preservation of pure traditional forms because there is no pressure to explain or justify practices to non-Muslim audiences. Community engagement remains exclusively within Muslim circles, with ritual participation involving extended family networks and the broader Bugis community without the need for interfaith sensitivity. However, this model also results in limited cultural exchange and missed opportunities for broader social integration that could enrich both minority and majority communities.

Collaboration Model: Active Interfaith Cooperation in Bali

Bali demonstrates the most innovative interfaith model where active collaboration between Muslim *sandro* and Hindu *pemangku* creates unprecedented interfaith spiritual cooperation. Daeng Bella's strategic partnership with Jero Pastika represents a paradigm shift from defensive minority positioning to proactive interfaith engagement that is mutually beneficial. This collaboration is facilitated by Balinese Hindu culture that is historically tolerant and inclusive, as well as shared spiritual vocabulary that enables meaningful dialogue about cosmic harmony and ritual efficacy.

The transformation that occurs is bidirectional: Bugis *masselle aseng* incorporates Hindu elements such as *tirta* and flowers, while Hindu *pemangku* develop appreciation for Bugis spiritual wisdom about name energetics. Jero Pastika's insight that "Synchronicity of Jagad Agung with Jagad Alit

will produce harmony" demonstrates genuine Hindu understanding and validation of Bugis cosmological principles. This reciprocal influence creates enriched spiritual practices that transcend religious boundaries while maintaining distinct cultural identities.

The impact on community engagement is particularly significant because this collaboration extends beyond religious leaders to broader Hindu-Muslim neighborhood relations. Hindu families sometimes seek consultation from Daeng Bella for naming concerns, indicating successful transcendence of religious boundaries through shared appreciation for spiritual wisdom. This model demonstrates the possibility for authentic interfaith cooperation that strengthens rather than weakens respective religious traditions.

Diplomatic Neutrality Model: Careful Navigation in Ambon

Ambon's post-conflict context necessitates the most sophisticated interfaith approach that prioritizes diplomatic sensitivity over collaborative intimacy. Pattiro Saddia's strategy reflects deep understanding that in a fragile post-conflict environment, any practice that appears religiously exclusive can trigger community tensions. Diplomatic neutrality involves careful framing of *masselle aseng* in universal spiritual language that is accessible to all religious communities without implying Islamic superiority or Christian inadequacy.

The transformation mechanism in this model involves strategic subtraction rather than addition—removing potentially controversial Islamic markers while preserving core spiritual functions. Pattiro's emphasis on "cosmic energy and ancestors" provides neutral vocabulary that can be understood and accepted across religious boundaries without threatening anyone's theological commitments. This approach requires extraordinary cultural competence and sensitivity to navigate complex interfaith dynamics in a post-conflict setting.

Community engagement patterns are distinct from both separation and collaboration models, characterized by careful inclusion that maintains respectful distance. Non-Muslim neighbors appreciate and sometimes utilize Pattiro's services, but interaction remains primarily functional rather than deeply collaborative. Success is measured not in terms of intimate partnership as in Bali, but in achievement of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect in a sensitive environment.

Reciprocal Influence Patterns and Broader Implications

Analysis reveals that interfaith dynamics are not simply unidirectional influence from majority to minority communities, but complex bidirectional processes that transform all participating groups. Majority communities in Bali and Ambon develop enhanced appreciation for spiritual wisdom diversity, while Muslim minorities acquire sophisticated skills in cultural translation and diplomatic engagement that strengthen their social position.

Theoretical implications suggest that interfaith interaction functions as a creative catalyst for religious innovation rather than a threat to authentic tradition. Different interfaith models—separation, collaboration, diplomatic neutrality—each produce valuable outcomes: preservation of pure forms, creative synthesis, and peaceful coexistence respectively. This diversity of approaches provides a flexible framework for Muslim minorities in various global contexts to develop contextually appropriate interfaith strategies that serve both religious authenticity and social integration objectives.

Mechanisms of Cultural Continuity and Islamic Authenticity

Comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the *masselle aseng* tradition reveals sophisticated mechanisms that ensure cultural continuity while maintaining Islamic authenticity across diverse demographic contexts. This research shows that authenticity is not static preservation but dynamic adaptation that preserves essential spiritual and cultural cores while allowing contextual modifications that enhance rather than diminish traditional integrity.

Preservation Strategies: Core Elements That Remain Maintained

Despite undergoing significant adaptations, traditional *masselle aseng* consistently maintains three fundamental core elements across all contexts: spiritual philosophy, authority structure, and procedural essence. Spiritual philosophy about names as carriers of cosmic energy and potential influence on life trajectory remains unchanged from Luwu to Ambon. Firuddin's assertion that "name changing is not arbitrary" reflects the same philosophical foundation that underlies Daeng Bella's collaborative approach in Bali and Pattiro Saddia's universalistic framing in Ambon.

Authority structure preserves the central role of *sandro* as spiritual consultants who possess expertise in numerological calculations and cosmic harmony, although validation mechanisms expand in minority contexts. H. Jusman in Luwu, Daeng Bella in Bali, and Pattiro Saddia in Ambon all function as legitimate traditional authorities who maintain continuity with ancestral wisdom while adapting delivery methods for contemporary contexts. Procedural essence—consultation, calculation, ceremonial implementation—remains consistent even when specific ritual elements undergo modification to accommodate interfaith sensitivities.

Adaptation Boundaries: Theological Limits and Cultural Identity Markers

Research identifies clear boundaries that determine acceptable adaptation versus unacceptable compromise, establishing a framework for distinguishing dynamic authenticity from cultural dilution. Theological limits consistently maintained across all contexts include preservation of tawhid (monotheistic principle), recognition of divine sovereignty, and adherence to fundamental Islamic ethics. Ambo Tola's statement that "matters of fortune and misfortune are determined by Allah's will" exemplifies this boundary regardless of ritual modifications, ultimate reliance on divine will is never compromised.

Cultural identity markers that are preserved include the maintenance of the Bugis language in core rituals, the preservation of ancestral lineage recognition, and the continuation of community-based decision-making processes. Even in the most universalistic adaptation in Ambon, Pattiro Saddia maintains a distinctly Bugis approach to spiritual consultation that differentiates the practice from generic healing modalities. These markers ensure that adaptation enhances rather than erases cultural distinctiveness, creating enriched rather than diluted traditional forms.

A critical boundary involves careful distinction between symbolic adaptation and substantive theological change. Incorporation of Hindu elements in Bali or universal framing in Ambon remains purely functional and aesthetic, not involving any compromise to core Islamic beliefs about divine unity, prophetic guidance, or moral imperatives. Adaptations that cross these boundaries would constitute loss of authenticity rather than creative evolution.

Authentication Methods: Community Validation and Islamic Scholarship Integration

Authentication mechanisms evolved from purely internal validation to increasingly sophisticated approaches that integrate community consensus with Islamic scholarly discourse. In North Luwu, traditional ulama-sandro collaboration provides sufficient validation within a homogeneous context, with religious leaders like H. Jusman ensuring compatibility with established jurisprudential principles. Community validation occurs naturally through widespread participation and acceptance without external challenges.

Bali innovation involves unprecedented interfaith validation that strengthens rather than weakens Islamic authenticity. Daeng Bella's collaboration with Jero Pastika creates dual authentication—Islamic validation through *'urf sabib* principles AND Hindu recognition of spiritual legitimacy. This approach demonstrates that authenticity can be enhanced through interfaith dialogue that illuminates universal spiritual values within specific cultural practices. Community validation expands beyond Muslim circles to broader neighborhood acceptance, creating a stronger social foundation for traditional practice.

Ambon represents the most sophisticated authentication approach that combines Islamic legal reasoning with post-conflict diplomatic sensitivity. Pattiro Saddia's universal framing maintains Islamic authenticity while achieving community validation across religious boundaries. Authentication occurs through demonstrated effectiveness in promoting spiritual healing and social harmony, outcomes that align with fundamental Islamic objectives of human wellbeing and social justice.

Dynamic Authenticity Framework: Adaptation as Survival Strategy

Theoretical synthesis of research findings establishes a dynamic authenticity framework that positions adaptation not as loss of identity but as a sophisticated survival strategy that ensures traditional continuity in changing social contexts. This framework recognizes that rigid preservation in inappropriate contexts can result in tradition extinction, while thoughtful adaptation enables traditions to flourish in new environments while maintaining essential character.

Dynamic authenticity involves three key principles (Khairiah et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2024; Susanto, 2025): (1) Core preservation - maintaining essential spiritual philosophy and cultural identity markers; (2) Contextual responsiveness - adapting delivery mechanisms to achieve social acceptance and relevance; and (3) Community agency - ensuring that adaptation decisions remain under the control of traditional community authorities rather than external pressures. This framework provides valuable guidance for minority communities globally in navigating cultural preservation challenges while maintaining authentic connection with ancestral wisdom and religious commitment.

Traditional Evolution Framework: Theory Development and Implementation

This research makes significant theoretical contributions to the development of *fiqh al-aqalliyat* through three empirical frameworks that expand understanding of Islamic jurisprudence in Muslim minority contexts. The three-stage evolution model from comparative analysis of Luwu-Bali-Ambon provides a systematic framework for understanding the trajectory of Islamic tradition adaptation from majority to minority contexts: (1) Pure Form—original practice with internal

validation in homogeneous environments (North Luwu); (2) Syncretistic Fusion—creative integration with compatible majority culture through interfaith collaboration (Bali); (3) Universalistic Translation—transformation into universal spiritual language for navigating post-conflict contexts (Ambon). This model contributes to *fiqh al-aqalliyat* theory by providing a predictive framework for proactive minority adaptation patterns.

The traditional concept of 'urf as static customary practice transforms into a dynamic adaptive mechanism that responds to changing social contexts. This research shows that in minority contexts, 'urf functions as a sophisticated cultural negotiation tool, enabling contextual expansion of classical criteria (niyyah, masalah, non-contradiction) to accommodate specific minority needs such as interfaith harmony and community resilience. A comprehensive framework for minority Islamic jurisprudence that transcends traditional boundaries of scholarly consensus (ijma') by including interfaith dialogue in determining practice validity. The collaborative validation mechanisms demonstrated in all three contexts—ulama-sandro collaboration (Luwu), sandro-pemangku partnership (Bali), and community-based consensus (Ambon)—illustrate the flexibility of Islamic law in addressing diverse social needs.

Research findings have substantial policy implications for government authorities in managing religious diversity. Policies can utilize minority adaptive practices as tools for social harmony and national integration. Specific recommendations include recognition and protection of adaptive religious practices as legitimate expressions of minority cultural rights, facilitation of interfaith dialogue programs, and development of nuanced legal frameworks to protect minority adaptation rights while maintaining commitment to secular governance principles. Majority and minority communities can learn from successful integration models, while the dynamic authenticity framework provides guidance for navigating adaptation decisions that maintain traditional integrity while achieving broader social acceptance.

The research framework has broad applicability for Muslim minority communities in diverse global contexts. The three-stage evolution model can be applied to develop context-appropriate adaptation strategies, providing guidance for assessing local conditions and choosing optimal approaches. This framework contributes to global discourse on multiculturalism, religious freedom, and cultural rights in increasingly diverse societies.

4. CONCLUSION

This research reveals comprehensive findings as follows: First, the evolution of the *masselle aseng* tradition from North Luwu to Bali and Ambon follows a three-stage model: Pure Form (original form in homogeneous Muslim majority context), Syncretistic Fusion (collaborative adaptation with integration of Hindu elements), and Universalistic Translation (transformation to neutral universal framing). Second, demographic factors (percentage of Muslims in population), cultural compatibility (aligned religious worldview), historical context (peaceful coexistence vs post-conflict), and social integration needs multi-variably determine the trajectory and intensity of adaptation across majority-minority contexts.

Third, validation through 'urf *sahih* experiences evolution from internal mechanisms (classical criteria: niyyah, masalah, non-contradiction) to collaborative authority involving non-Muslim perspectives, with development of additional criteria for minority contexts: diplomatic masalah,

cultural translation capability, and community resilience. Fourth, interfaith interaction produces three transformation models: separation (homogeneous validation), active collaboration (interfaith cooperation), and diplomatic neutrality (careful navigation), which influence evolution from homogeneous to pluralistic practices through bidirectional processes that enrich all communities.

Fifth, cultural continuity and Islamic authenticity are ensured through a dynamic authenticity framework that maintains core elements (spiritual philosophy, authority structure, procedural essence) while adapting delivery mechanisms. This framework proves that adaptation is a sophisticated survival strategy that enables traditions to develop across diverse demographic spectrums without losing religious and cultural integrity.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all individuals and communities who generously shared their insights, experiences, and cultural knowledge throughout the development of this research. Their diverse perspectives and lived narratives have enriched the depth of our understanding and served as a cornerstone for this study. Special thanks are also due to the traditional and religious leaders in Teteuri Village, as well as respondents in Tana Toraja, Bali, and Ambon, whose openness and wisdom have significantly shaped the analytical depth of our work. This research was made possible with the financial and institutional support from Universitas Islam Negeri Palopo, to whom we express our sincere appreciation for enabling this academic endeavor to be realized and disseminated.

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